

Iyer, Woldegabriel recognized for helping New Mexico small businesses

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NMSBA program provides unique technical expertise and laboratory capabilities

Two Los Alamos National Laboratory scientists were recognized recently for helping small businesses in New Mexico by using their unique technical expertise and laboratory capabilities.

Rashi Iyer of Systems Analysis and Surveillance and Giday Woldegabriel of Earth System Observations were recognized recently for helping small businesses in New Mexico by using their unique technical expertise and laboratory capabilities. The scientists received Principal Investigator Excellence (PIE) Awards for assisting New Mexico small businesses.

Iyer and Woldegabriel were recognized at a breakfast reception sponsored by Los Alamos National Security, LLC; the New Mexico Small Business Assistance (NMSBA) Program; and Los Alamos Connect at the Los Alamos Research Park on Nov. 5. Each researcher received a freshly baked pie in appreciation for their efforts.

Why they were recognized

Woldegabriel was honored for his work on leveraged projects, which allow multiple small businesses that share technical challenges to request assistance collectively for a larger project. His leveraged project, called Commercial Soil Mining, focuses on agricultural concerns of farmers and ranchers in northeastern New Mexico. Woldegabriel, with the help of fellow researcher Marvin Gard of Earth System Observations, is evaluating soil resources available to area farmers as a product that potentially could be marketed as a soil enhancement to home gardening enthusiasts.

Iyer was recognized for her technical assistance helping a single business solve a unique technical challenge. Iyer helped Oasis Skin Spa, LLC, a Los Alamos business, utilize the unique skin-cell culturing facilities at Los Alamos to test LED light exposure on skin cells. The spa specializes in skin-care services such as facials, LED light therapy, micro current, and ultrasonic peeling.

"What's nice about these projects," said Iyer, "is that that they are well-defined and have a clear scope and schedule. You can finish them and have a sense of accomplishment and that is lacking in some larger projects. Also, what you do is really helping the company understand their product better."

About the NMSBA Program

The NMSBA Program was created in 2000 by the New Mexico Legislature to bring national laboratory technology and expertise to small businesses in state, promoting economic development with an emphasis on rural areas. Originally started at Sandia National Laboratories, Los Alamos joined the program in 2007.

Under the program, small businesses with technical challenges can seek no-cost assistance from laboratory scientists or engineers for projects that require testing, design consultation, or access to special equipment or facilities. Up to \$2.4 million of assistance in the form of labor hours is available annually each from Los Alamos and Sandia. This year, NMSBA at Los Alamos will assist more than 140 small businesses statewide.

Laboratory scientists and investigators interested in collaborating with small businesses through the NMSBA Program should contact [Becky Coel-Roback](#) or [Kim Sherwood](#) at the Richard P. Feynman Center for Innovation.

More information about the [New Mexico Small Business Assistance Program](#) is available online.

Caption for image below: Rashi Iyer, center, poses with David Pesiri, right, leader of the Richard P. Feynman Center for Innovation, and Becky Coel-Roback, PIE Award coordinator, after winning a PIE award. Iyer was one of two scientists honored for their contributions to the New Mexico Small Business Assistance Program.